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THE HISTORY OF MR. FANTOM,

THE

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The HISTORY, &c.

MR. FANTOM was a retail trader in the city of London. As he had no turn to any expenſive vices, he was reckoned a ſober decent man, but he was covetous and proud, ſelfiſh and conceited. As ſoon as he got forward in the world, his vanity began to diſplay itſelf, but not in the ordinary method of making a figure and living away; but ſtill he was tormented with a longing deſire to draw public notice, and to diſtinguiſh himſelf. He felt a general ſenſe of diſcontent at what he was, with a general ambition to be ſomething which he was not; but this deſire had not yet turned itſelf to any particular object. It was not by his money he could hope to be diſtinguiſhed, for half his acquaintance had more, and a man muſt be rich indeed, to be noted for his riches in London. Mr. Fantom's mind was a prey to vain imaginations. He deſpiſed all thoſe little acts of kindneſs and charity which every man is called to perform every day, and while he was contriving grand ſchemes which lay quite out of his reach, he neglected the ordinary duties of life which lay directly before him.

About this time he got hold of a famous little book written by the new philoſopher, whoſe peſtilent doctrines found a ready entrance into Mr. Fantom's mind; a mind at once ſhallow and inquiſitive, ſpe-

culative and vain, ambitious and diſſatisfied. As almoſt every book was new to him, he fell into the common error of thoſe who begin to read late in life, that of thinking that what he did not know himſelf, was equally new to others; and he was apt to fancy that he and the author he was reading were the only two people in the world who knew any thing. This book led to the grand diſcovery; he had now found what his heart panted after, a way to *diſtinguiſh himſelf*. To ſtart out a full grown philoſopher at once, to be wiſe without education, to diſpute without learning, and to make proſelytes without argument, was a ſhort cut to fame, which well ſuited his vanity and his ignorance. He rejoiced that he had been ſo clever as to examine for himſelf, pitied his friends who took things upon truſt, and was reſolved to aſſert the freedom of his own mind. To a man fond of bold novelties and daring paradoxes, ſolid argument would be flat, and truth would be dull, merely becauſe it is not new. Mr. Fantom believed, not in proportion to the ſtrength of the evidence, but to the impudence of the aſſertion. The trampling on holy ground with dirty ſhoes, the ſmearing the ſanctuary with filth and mire, the calling prophets and apoſtles by the moſt ſcurrilous names was new, and daſhing, and dazzling. Mr. Fantom now being ſet free from the chains of ſlavery and ſuperſtition, was reſolved to ſhow his zeal in the uſual way, by trying to free others, but it would have hurt his vanity had he known that he was the convert of a man who had written only for the vulgar, who had *invented* nothing, no not even one idea of original wickedneſs; but who had ſtooped

to rake up out of the kennel of infidelity, all the loathsome dregs and offal dirt, which politer unbelievers had thrown away as too grofs and offenfive for their better bred readers.

Mr. Fantom, who confidered that a philofopher muft fet up with a little fort of ftock in trade, now picked up all the common place notions againft Chriftianity, which have been anfwered a hundred times over; thefe he kept by him ready cut and dried, and brought out in all companies with a zeal which would have done honour to a better caufe, but which the friends to a better caufe are not fo apt to difcover. He foon got all the cant of the new fchool. He talked of *narrownefs*, and *ignorance*, and *bigotry*, and *prejudice*, and *prieftcraft*, on the one hand; and on the other of *public good*, the *love of mankind*, and *liberality*, and *candour*, and *toleration*, and above all, *benevolence*. Benevolence, he faid, made up the whole of religion, and all the other parts of it were nothing but cant and jargon, and hypocrify. Finding however, that he made little impreffion on his old club at the Cat and Bagpipes, he grew tired of their company, yet there was one member whofe fociety he could not refolve to give up, though they feldom agreed, as indeed no two men in the fame clafs and habits of life could lefs refemble each other. Mr. Trueman was an honeft, plain, fimple hearted tradefman of the good old cut, who feared God and followed his bufinefs, he went to church twice on Sundays and minded his fhop all the week, fpent frugally, gave liberally, and faved moderately.

Mr. Fantom refolved to retire for a while into the country, and devote his time to his new plans, fchemes, theories, and projects for the public good.

A life of talking, and reading, and writing, and disputing, and teaching, and profelyting now ſtruck him as the only life, ſo he ſoon ſet out for the country with his family, to which was now added his new footman, William Wilſon, whom he had taken with a good character out of a ſober family. He was no ſooner ſettled than he wrote to invite Mr. Trueman to come and pay him a viſit, for he would have burſt if he could not have got ſome one to whom he might diſplay his new knowledge; he knew that if on the one hand Trueman was no ſcholar, yet on the other he was no fool, and though he deſpiſed his *prejudices*, yet he thought he might be made a good decoy duck, for if he could once bring Trueman over, the whole club at the Cat and Bagpipes might be brought to follow his example, and thus he might ſee himſelf at the head of a ſociety of his own profelytes, the ſupreme object of a philoſopher's ambition. Trueman came accordingly. He ſoon found that however he might be ſhocked at the impious doctrines his friend maintained, yet that an important leſſon might be learnt even from the worſt enemies of truth; namely, an ever-wakeful attention to their grand object. If they ſet out with talking of trade or politics; of private news or public affairs, Mr. Fanton was ever on the watch to hitch in his darling doctrines; whatever he began with, he was ſure to end with a pert ſquib at the Bible, a vapid jeſt on the clergy, the miſeries of ſuperſtition, and the bleſſings of philoſophy. "Oh!" ſaid Trueman to himſelf, "when ſhall I ſee Chriſtians half ſo much in earneſt? Why is it that almoſt all zeal is on the wrong ſide?"

"Well, Mr. Fanton," ſaid Trueman next day

at breakfaſt, "I am afraid you are leading but an idle ſort of life here." "Sir," ſaid Fantom, "I now begin to live to ſome purpoſe; I have indeed loſt too much time, and waſted my talents on a little retail trade, in which one is of no note; one can't diſtinguiſh one's ſelf." "So much the better," ſaid Trueman, "I had rather not diſtinguiſh myſelf, unleſs it was by leading a better life than my neighbours. There is nothing I ſhould dread more than being talked about. I dare ſay now heaven is in a good meaſure filled with people whoſe names were never heard out of their own ſtreet or village. So I beg leave *not* to diſtinguiſh myſelf." "Yes, but one may if it is only by ſigning one's name to an eſſay or a paragraph in a newſpaper," ſaid Fantom. "Heaven keep John Trueman's name out of a newſpaper," interrupted he in a fright, "for it muſt either be found in the Old Bailey or the Bankrupt Liſt, unleſs indeed I were to remove ſhop, or ſell off my old ſtock." "But in your preſent confined ſituation you can be of no uſe," ſaid Fantom. "That I deny," interrupted the other. "I have filled all the pariſh offices with ſome credit. I never took a bribe at an election, no not ſo much as a treat; I take care of my apprentices, and don't ſet them a bad example by running to plays and Sadler's Wells in the week, or jaunting about in a gig all day on Sundays; for I look upon it that the country jaunt of the maſter on Sundays expoſes his ſervants to more danger than their whole week's temptations in trade put together."

Fantom. I once had the ſame vulgar prejudices about the Church and the Sabbath, and all that antiquated ſtuff. But even on your own narrow principles, how can a thinking being ſpend his Sunday

better (if he muſt loſe one day in ſeven by having any Sunday at all) than by going into the country to admire the works of nature.

Trueman. I ſuppoſe you mean the works of God; for I never read in the Bible that nature made any thing. I ſhould rather think that ſhe herſelf was made by him who made all things; by him, who, when he ſaid *thou ſhalt not murder*, ſaid alſo, *thou ſhalt keep holy the Sabbath Day*. But now do you really think that all that multitude of coaches, chariots, chaiſes, vis-a-vis, booby hutches, ſulkies, ſociables, phaetons, gigs, curricles, cabrioles, chairs, ſtages, pleaſure carts and horſes, which crowd our roads; all thoſe country houſes within reach, to which the London friends pour in to the gorgeous Sunday feaſt, which the ſervants are kept from church to dreſs; all thoſe public houſes under the ſigns of which you read theſe alluring words, AN ORDINARY ON SUNDAYS; I ſay, do you believe that all thoſe houſes and carriages are crammed with philoſophers who go on Sundays into the country to admire the works of nature as you call it? Indeed, from the reeling gait of ſome of them when they go back at night, one might take them for a certain ſect called the *tipling* philoſophers. Then in anſwer to your charge that a little tradeſman can do no good, I muſt tell you that I belong to the ſociety for relieving priſoners for ſmall debts, and to the ſick man's friend, and to——

Fantom. Oh, enough—all theſe are petty occupations.

Trueman. Then they are better ſuited to petty men of petty fortune. I had rather have an ounce of real good done with my own hands, and ſeen with my own eyes, than ſpeculate about doing a

ton in a wild way which I know can never be brought about.

Fantom. I deſpiſe a narrow field. O for the reign of univerſal benevolence! I want to make all mankind good and happy.

Trueman. Dear me! ſure that muſt be a wholeſale ſort of a job; had not you better try your hand at a town or a pariſh firſt?

Fantom. Sir, I have a plan in my head for relieving the miſeries of the whole world. Every thing is bad as it now ſtands. I would alter all the laws, and do away all the religions, and put an end to all the wars in the world. I would every where redreſs the injuſtice of fortune, or what the vulgar call providence. I would put an end to all puniſhments, I would not leave a ſingle priſoner on the face of the globe. This is what I call doing things on a grand ſcale. "A ſcale with a vengeance," ſaid Trueman. "As to releaſing the priſoners, however I don't ſo much like that, as it would be pleaſing a few rogues at the expence of all honeſt men; but as to the reſt of your plan, if all *Chriſtian countries would be ſo good as turn Chriſtians*, it might be helped on a good deal. There would be ſtill miſery enough left indeed, becauſe God intended this world ſhould be earth and not heaven. But ſtill, baniſhing religion from the world would be like ſtriking off all the pounds from an overcharged bill; and all the troubles which would be left, would be reduced to mere ſhillings, pence, and farthings, as one may ſay."

Fantom. Your project would rivet the chains which mine is deſigned to break.

Trueman. Sir, I have no projects. Projects are in general the offspring of reſtleſsneſs, vanity, and

idleneſs. I am too buſy for Projects, too contented for Theories, and, I hope, have too much humility for a philoſopher. The utmoſt extent of my ambition at preſent is, to redreſs the wrongs of a pariſh 'prentice who has been cruelly uſed by his maſter; indeed I have another little ſcheme, which is to proſecute a fellow in our ſtreet who has let a poor wretch in a work-houſe, of which he had the care, periſh through neglect, and you muſt aſſiſt me.

Fantom. The pariſh muſt do that, as to me I own that the wrongs of the Poles and South Americans ſo fill my mind, as to leave me no time to attend the petty ſorrows of work-houſes and pariſh 'prentices. It is provinces, empires, continents, that the benevolence of the philoſopher embraces; every one can do a little paltry good to his next neighbour.

Trueman. Every one can, but I don't ſee every one does. If they would, indeed, your buſineſs would be ready done to your hands, and your grand ocean of benevolence would be filled with the drops which private charity would throw into it. I am glad, however, you are ſuch a friend to the priſoners, becauſe I am juſt now getting a little ſubſcription from our club, to ſet free your poor old friend Tom Saunders, a very honeſt brother tradeſman, who got firſt into debt, and then into goal, through no fault of his own, but merely through the preſſure of the times. We have each of us allowed a trifle every week towards maintaining Tom's young family ſince he has been in priſon, but we think we ſhall do much more ſervice to Saunders, and indeed in the end lighten our own expence, by paying down at once a little ſum to reſtore to him the comforts of life, and put him in

a way of maintaining his family again. We have made up the money all except five guineas, I am already promiſed four, and you have nothing to do but to give me the fifth. And ſo for a ſingle guinea, without any of the trouble, the meetings, and the looking into his affairs, which we have had, you will at once have the pleaſure (and it is no ſmall one) of helping to ſave a worthy family from ſtarving, of redeeming an old friend from gaol, and of putting a little of your boaſted benevolence into action. Realize! Maſter Fantom, there is nothing like realizing. "Why, hearkee' Mr. Trueman," ſaid Fantom ſtammering, and looking very black, "don't think I value a guinea; no Sir, I deſpiſe money, 'tis traſh, 'tis dirt, and beneath the regard of a wiſe man. 'Tis one of the unfeeling inventions of artificial ſociety. Sir I could talk to you for half a day on the abuſe of riches, and on my own contempt of money.

Trueman. O pray don't give yourſelf the trouble, it will be an eaſier way by half of proving both, juſt to put your hand in your pocket and give me the guinea without ſaying a word about it; and then to you who value time ſo much and money ſo little, it will cut the matter ſhort. But come now (for I ſee you will give nothing) I ſhould be mighty glad to know what is the ſort of good you do yourſelves, ſince you always object to what is done by others. "Sir," ſaid Mr. Fantom, "the object of a true philoſopher is to diffuſe light and knowledge. I wiſh to ſee the whole world enlightened."

Trueman. Amen! if you mean with the light of the Goſpel. But if you mean that one religion is as good as another, and that no religion is the beſt of

all; in ſhort, if you want to make the whole world philoſophers, why they had better ſtay as they are. But as to the true light, I wiſh it to reach the very loweſt, and I therefore bleſs God for Charity Schools, as inſtruments of diffuſing it.

Fantom, who had no reaſon to expect that his friend was going to call upon him for a ſubſcription on this account, ventured to praiſe them. Saying, "I am no enemy to theſe inſtitutions. I would indeed change the object of inſtruction, but I would have the whole world inſtructed."

Here Mrs. Fantom, who with her daughter had quietly ſat by at their work, ventured to put in a word, a liberty ſhe ſeldom took with her huſband, who in his zeal to make the whole world free and happy, was too prudent to include his wife. "Then my dear," ſaid ſhe, "I wonder you don't let yourown ſervants be taught a little. The maids can ſcarcely tell a letter, or ſay the Lord's Prayer; and you know you won't allow them time to learn. William too has never been at church ſince we came out of town. He was at firſt very orderly and obedient, but now he is ſeldom ſober of an evening, and in the morning when he ſhould be rubbing the tables in the parlour, he is generally lolling upon them and reading your little manual of the new philoſophy." "Mrs. Fantom," ſaid her huſband angrily, "you know that my labours for the public good, leave me little time to think of my own family. I muſt have a great field, I like to do good to hundreds at once."

"I am very glad of that papa," ſaid Miſs Polly, "for then I hope you won't refuſe to ſubſcribe to all thoſe pretty children at the Sunday School as

you did yesterday, when the gentleman came a begging, because that is the very thing you were wishing for; there are two or three hundred to be done good to at once."

Trueman. Well Mr. Fantom, you are a wonderful man to keep up such a stock of benevolence at so small an expence. To love mankind so dearly and yet avoid all opportunities of doing them good; to have such a noble zeal for the millions, and to feel so little compassion for the units; surely none but a philosopher could indulge so much philanthrophy and so much frugality at the same time.

Fantom. I despise the man whose benevolence is swallowed up in the narrow concerns of his own family, or parish, or country.

Trueman. Well, now I have a notion that 'tis as well to do one's own duty as that of another man, and to do good at home as well as abroad, and I had as lieve help Tom Saunders to freedom as a Pole or a South American, though I should be very glad to help them too, but one must begin to love somewhere, and to do good somewhere; and I think 'tis as natural to love one's own family and to do good in one's own neighbourhood as to any body else. And if every man in every family, parish, and county, did the same, why! all the schemes would meet, and the end of one parish where I was doing good would be the beginning of another where somebody else was doing good; so my schemes would jut into my neighbours, and all would fit with a sort of dove-tail exactness."

Here they were told dinner was on table. "Don't think," said Mr. Fantom" that you have the best of the argument, because you happen to have the last

word. We will finish our talk some other time" So saying they went into dinner.

When they sat down, Mr. Fantom was not a little out of humour, to see his table in some disorder. William was also rather more negligent than usual. If the company called for bread, he gave them beer, and he took away the clean plates, and gave them dirty ones. Mr. Fantom soon discovered that his servant was very drunk; he flew into a violent passion, and ordered him out of the room, charging that he should not appear in his presence in that condition. William obeyed; but having slept an hour or two, and got about half sober, he again made his appearance. His master gave him a most severe reprimand, and called him an idle, drunken, vicious fellow. "Sir," said William, very pertly, "if I do get drunk now and then, I only do it for the good of my country, and in obedience to your wishes." Mr. Fantom, thoroughly provoked, now began to scold him in words not fit to be repeated, and asked him what he meant. "Why, Sir," said William, "you are a philosopher you know, and I have often overheard you say to your company that private vices are public benefits, and so I thought thatgetting drunk was as pleasant a way of doing good to the public as any, especially when I could oblige my master at the same time."

"Get out of my house," said Mr. Fantom in a great rage." "I do not desire to stay a moment longer, so pay me my wages." "Not I, indeed," replied the master, nor will I give you a character, so never let me see your face again." William took his master at his word, and not only got out of the house, but out of the country too as fast as possible. When they found he was really gone,

they made a hue-and-cry, in order to detain him till they had examined if he had left every thing in the houſe as he had found it. But William had got out of reach, knowing he could not ſtand ſuch a ſcrutiny. On examination, Mr. Fantom found that all his port was gone, and Mrs. Fantom miſſed three of her beſt new ſpoons. William was purſued but without ſucceſs, and Mr. Fantom was ſo much diſcompoſed, that he could not for he reſt of the day talk on any ſubject but his wine and his ſpoons, nor harangue on any project but that of recovering both by bringing William to juſtice.

Some days paſſed away, in which Mr. Fantom having had time to cool, began to be aſhamed that he had been betrayed into ſuch ungoverned paſſion. He made the beſt excuſe he could, ſaid no man was perfect, and though he owned he had been too violent, yet he ſtill hoped William would be brought to the puniſhment he deſerved. "In the mean time," ſaid Mr. Trueman, "Seeing how ill philoſophy has agreed with your man, ſuppoſe you were to ſet about teaching your maids a little religion?" Mr. Fantom coolly replied, "that the impertinent retort of a drunken footman could not ſpoil a ſyſtem." "Your ſyſtem, however, and your own behaviour," ſaid Trueman, "have made that footman a ſcoundrel: and you are anſwerable for his offences." "Not I truly," ſaid Fantom, "he has ſeen me do no harm; he has neither ſeen me cheat, gamble, nor get drunk; and I defy you to ſay I corrupt my ſervants. I am a moral man, Sir." "Mr. Fantom," ſaid Truman, "if you were to get drunk every day, and game every night, you would indeed endanger your own ſoul, and give a dreadful example to your family; but great as thoſe ſins

are, and God forbid that I ſhould attempt to leſſen them, ſtill they are not worſe, nay, they are not ſo bad as the peſtilent doctrines with which you infect your houſe and your neighbourhood. A bad action is like a ſingle murder, but a wicked principle is throwing lighted gunpowder into a town, it is poiſoning a river; there are no bounds, no certainty, no end to its miſchief. The ill effects of the worſt action may ceaſe in time, and the conſequences of your example may end with your life; but ſouls may be brought to perdition by a wicked principle, after the author of it has been dead for ages.

Fantom. You talk like an ignoramus, who has never read the new Philoſophy. All this nonſenſe of future puniſhment is now done away. It is *our* benevolence which makes us reject your creed; we can no more believe in a Deity who permits ſo much evil in the preſent world, than one who threatens eternal puniſhment in the next.

Truenan. What ſhall mortal be more merciful than God? Do you pretend to be more compaſſionate than that gracious Father, who ſent his Son into the world to die for ſinners?

Fantom. You take all your notions of the Deity from the vulgar views your Bible gives you of him." "To be ſure I do," ſaid Truenan, "can you tell me any way of getting a better notion of him? I dont want any of your farthing-candle philoſophy in the broad ſun-ſhine of the Goſpel, Mr. Fantom. My Bible tells me that *God is love*, not merely loving, but LOVE. Now do you think a Being whoſe very eſſence is love, would permit any miſery among his children here, if it was not to be, ſome way or other, or ſomewhere or other, for their good? You forget too that in a world

where there is sin there must be misery. Then too, I suppose, God permits misery partly to exercise the sufferers and partly to try the prosperous; for by trouble God corrects some and tries others. Suppose now, Tom Saunders had not been put in prison, you and I——no, I beg pardon, *you* saved your guinea, well then, our club and I could not have shown our kindness by getting him out, nor would poor Saunders himself have had an opportunity of exercising his own patience under want and imprisonment. So you see one reason why God permits misery, is that good men may have an opportunity of lessening it." Mr. Fantom replied, "There is no object which I have more at heart; I have as I told you a plan in my head of such universal benevolence as to include the happiness of all mankind." "Mr. Fantom," said, Trueman, "I feel that I have a general good-will towards all my brethren of mankind; and if I had as much money in my purse as I have love in my heart, I trust I should prove it; all I say is, that in a station of life where I can't do much, I am more called upon to procure the happiness of a poor neighbour who has no one else to look to, than to form wild plans for the good of mankind too extensive to be accomplished, and too chimerical to be put in practice. I can't free whole countries, nor reform the evils of society at large, but I *can* free an aggrieved wretch in a workhouse, and I can reform myself and my own family.

Some weeks after a letter was brought to Mr. Fantom from his late servant William, who had been turned away for drunkenness, as related in the former part of this history, and who had also robbed his master of some wine and some spoons. Mr. Fantom glancing his eye over the letter said,

"It is dated from Chelmsford jail; that rascal is got into prison. I am glad of it with all my heart, it is the fittest place for such scoundrels. I hope he will be sent to Botany Bay, if not hanged." "O ho! my good friend, said Trueman, then I find that in abolishing all prisons you would just let one stand for the accommodation of those who should happen to rob *you*." Mr. Fantom drily observed, that he was not fond of jokes, and proceeded to read the letter. It expressed an earnest wish that his late master would condescend to pay him one visit in his dark and doleful abode, as he wished to say a few words to him, before the dreadful sentence of the law, which had already been pronounced, should be executed."

"Let us go and see the poor fellow," said Trueman, "it is but a morning's ride. If he is really so near his end it would be cruel to refuse him." "Not I truly," said Fantom, "he deserves nothing at my hands but the halter he is likely to meet with. Such post as is not to be had for money; and the spoons part of my new dozen." "As to the wine," said Trueman, "I am afraid you must give that up, but the only way to get any tiding of the spoons is to go and hear what he has to say; I have no doubt but he will make such a confession as may be very useful to others, which, you know, is one grand advantage of punishments; and besides, we may afford him some little comfort." "As to comfort he deserves none from me," said Fantom, "and as to his confessions they can be of no use to me, but as they give me a chance of getting my spoons, so I don't much care if I do take a ride with you."

When they came to the priſon Mr. Trueman's tender heart ſunk within him. He deplored the corrupt nature of man, which makes ſuch rigorous confinement needful, not merely for the puniſhment of the offender, but for the ſafety of ſociety. Fantom, from mere trick and habit, was juſt preparing a ſpeech on general benevolence, and the cruelty of impriſonment, till the recollection of his old port and his new ſpoons cooled his ardour, and he went on without ſaying a word. When they reached the cell where the unhappy William was confined they ſtopped at the door. The poor wretch had thrown himſelf on the ground as well as his chains would give him leave. He groaned piteouſly, and was ſo ſwallowed up with a ſenſe of his own miſeries, that he neither heard the door open, nor ſaw the gentlemen. He was attempting to pray, but in an agony which made his words hardly intelligible. Thus much they could make out.—"God be merciful to me a ſinner—the chief of ſinners!" then ſuddenly attempting to ſtart up, but prevented by his irons, he roared out, "O God! thou canſt *not* be merciful to me for I have denied thee; I have ridiculed my Saviour who died for me; I have derided his word, I have reſiſted his ſpirit. I have laughed at that heaven which is ſhut againſt me, I have denied thoſe torments which await me. To-morrow! to morrow! O for a longer ſpace for repentance, O for a ſhort reprieve from hell."—Mr. Trueman wept ſo loud that it drew the attention of the criminal, who now lifted up his eyes, and caſt on his late maſter a look ſo dreadful, that Fantom wiſhed for a moment that he had given up all hope of the ſpoons rather than have expoſed himſelf to ſuch a ſcene. At length the poor wretch ſaid, in a voice that would have melt-

ed a heart of ſtone, "O Sir, are you there? I did wiſh to ſee you before my dreadful ſentence is put in execution." Oh Sir! to-morrow to-morrow! But I have a confeſſion to make to you." This revived Mr. Fantom, who again ventured to glance a hope at the ſpoons. "Sir, ſaid William "I could not die without making my confeſſion." "Aye, and reſtitution too I hope," replied Fantom. "Where are my ſpoons?"—"Sir, they are gone with the reſt of my wretched booty. But Oh, Sir! theſe ſpoons make ſo petty an article in my black account that I hardly think of them. Murder, Sir, murder is the crime for which I am juſtly doomed to die. Oh, Sir! Who can dwell with everlaſting burnings?" As this was a queſtion which even a philoſopher could not anſwer, Mr. Fantom was going to ſteal off, eſpecially as he now gave up all hope of the ſpoons; but William called him back.—"Stay, Sir, ſtay, I conjure you, as you will anſwer it at the bar of God. You are the cauſe of my being about to ſuffer a ſhameful death. Yes, Sir, you made me a drunkard, a thief, and a murderer." How dare you, William," cried Mr. Fantom, with great emotion, "accuſe me with being the cauſe of ſuch horrid crimes?" "Sir," anſwered the criminal, "from you I learnt the principles which lead to thoſe crimes. By the grace of God I ſhould never have fallen into ſins deſerving of the gallows if I had not often overheard you ſay there was no hereafter, no judgment, no future reckoning. O, Sir! there is a hell, dreadful, inconceivable, eternal!" Here through the exceſs of anguiſh, the poor fellow fainted away. Mr. Fantom, who did not at all reliſh this ſcene, ſaid to his friend, "well Sir,

we will go if you please, for you see there is nothing to be done."

"Sir," replied Mr. Trueman, mournfully, "you may go if you please, but I shall stay, for I see there is a great deal to be done." "What," rejoined the other, "do you think it possible his life can be saved?" "No, indeed," said Trueman, "but I hope it is possible his soul may be saved." "I don't understand these things," said Fantom, making toward the door. "Nor I neither," said Trueman, "but as a fellow sinner I am bound to do what I can for this poor fellow. Do you go home Mr. Fantom and finish your treatise on universal benevolence, and the blessed effects of philosophy; and hark ye, be sure you let the frontispiece of your book represent *William on the gibbet*; that will be what your parson calls a PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION. You know I hate theories; this is *realizing*; this is PHILOSOPHY made easy to the meanest capacity."

Mr. Fantom sneaked off to finish his work at home, and Mr. Trueman staid to finish his in the prison. He passed the night with the wretched convict, he prayed with him and for him, and read to him the penitential psalms, and some portions of the Gospel. But he was too humble and too prudent a man to venture out of his depth by arguments and consolations, which he was not warranted to use. (this he left for the minister.) But he pressed on William the great duty of making the only amends now in his power to those whom he had led astray. They then drew up the following paper, which Mr. Trueman got printed, and gave away at the place of execution.

Laſt Words, Confeſſion, and Dying Speech

OF

WILLIAM WILSON,

Who was executed at Carlisle for Murder.

"I was bred up in the fear of God, and lived with credit in many ſober families, in which I was a faithful ſervant. But being tempted by a little higher wages, I left a good place to go and live with Mr. Fantom, who, however, made good none of his fine promiſes, but proved a hard maſter. In his ſervice I was not allowed time to go to Church. This troubled me at firſt, till I overheard my maſter ſay, that going to church was a ſuperſtitious prejudice, and only meant for the vulgar. Upon this I reſolved to go no more; for I thought there could not be two religions, one for the maſter, and one for the ſervant. Finding my maſter never prayed, I too left off praying, this gave ſatan great power over me, ſo that I from that time fell into almoſt every ſin. I was very uneaſy at firſt, and my conſcience gave me no reſt; but I was ſoon reconciled by over-hearing my maſter and another gentleman ſay, that death was only a long ſleep, and hell and judgment were but an invention of prieſts to keep the poor in order. I mention this as a warning to all maſters and miſtreſſes to take care what they converſe about while ſervants are waiting at table. They cannot tell how many ſouls they have ſent to perdition by ſuch looſe talk. The crime for which I die is the natural conſequence of the principles I

learnt of my master. A rich man, indeed, who throws off religion, may escape the gallows, because want does not drive him to commit the crimes which lead to it; but what shall restrain a needy man, who has been taught that there is no dreadful reckoning? Oh, my dear, fellow servants! take warning by my sad fate, never be tempted away from a sober service for the sake of a little more wages. Never venture your immortal souls in houses where God is not feared. And now hear me, O my God, though I have blasphemed thee; Forgive me, O my Saviour! though I have denied thee. O Lord most holy, O God most mighty, deliver me from the bitter pains of eternal death! and receive my soul for his sake who died for sinners.

WILLIAM WILSON."

Mr. Trueman would never leave this poor penitent till he was launched into eternity, but attended him with the minister in the Cart. This pious minister never cared to tell me what he thought of William's state. When I ventured to mention my hope, that though his penitence was late, yet it was sincere, and spoke of the dying thief on the cross as a ground of encouragement, the minister, with a very serious look, made me this answer, "Sir, that instance is too often brought forward on occasions to which it does not apply: I do not chuse to say any thing to your application of it in the present case, but I will answer you in the words of a good man speaking of the penitent thief. There is *one* such instance given that nobody might despair, and there is *but* one, that nobody might presume.

Poor William was turned off just a quarter before eleven, and may the Lord have had mercy on his soul!

Z.

THE END.

A List of the Tracts published during the Year 1795.

HISTORIES.

The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain. Part I. and II.
Tom White the Postilion. Part I. and II.
Two Shoemakers. Part I.
Life of William Baker, with his Funeral Sermon by the Reverend Mr. Gilpin.
The Two Soldiers.
The Plague in London, 1665.
The Lancashire Collier Girl.
The Two Wealthy Farmers; or, History of Mr. Bragwell. Part I. and II.
The Good Mother's Legacy.
Sorrowful Sam; or, the Two Blacksmiths.
True Stories of Two Good Negroes.
Murders.
The Happy Waterman.
The Shipwreck of the Centaur.

SUNDAY READINGS.

Husbandry Moralized.
On the Religious Advantages of the present Inhabitants of Great Britain.
The Beggarly Boy, a Parable.
Daniel in the Den of Lions.
Noah's Flood.
Hints to all Ranks of People on the Occasion of the present Scarcity.
The Harvest Home.
The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard.
The Troubles of Life; or, the Guinea and the Shilling.

POETRY.

Divine Songs, by Dr. Watts, for Children.
New History of a True Book.
The Carpenter; or, Danger of Evil Company.
The Gin Shop.
The Riot.
Patient Joe.
The Execution of Wild Robert.
A New Christmas Carrol, called the Merry Christmas, or happy New Year.
The Sorrows of Yamba; or, the Negro Woman's Lamentation.